

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 DLOS-09

AF-08 /127 W

-----021922Z 028856 /45

R 011915Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

SECSTATE WASHDC 3774

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VALETTA

RUDONBAXCINCUSNAVEUR

COMMSIXTHFLT

EUCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5475

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS, ENRG, IT, LY, TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN-LIBYAN DISPUTE: VIEW FROM ROME

REFS: (Q) TRIPOLI 407: (B) TUNIS 2163: (C) ROME 3749

1. REVIEW OF LATEST TUNISIAN-LIBYAN-SAIPEM DRILLING BARGE SCARABEO IV SITUATION MARCH 31 WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REPS AND WITH ENI (SAIPEM PARENT COMPANY) CONFIRMED THAT NO RPT NO U.S. CITIZENS ABOARD SCARABEO IV. RUMOR THAT AN AMERICAN CREW OR CREWMEMBER WOULD BE PLACED ABOARD SCARABEO IV (REF (B)) HAD ALSO COME TO ATTENTION OF MFA; OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR MIDDLE EASTERN/NORTH AFRICAN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS GALLI SAID THAT VERSION COMING TO HIS ATTENTION HELD THAT AN AMERICAN GROUP HAD BEEN APPROACHED TO SUPPLY RIG AND CREW, CONFIDENTIAL

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RIG TO FLY FLAG OF CONVENIENCE AND CREW TO BE COMPOSED OF ADVENTURES ATTRACTED BY HIGH PAY. GALLI SUGGESTED THAT THIS RUMOR MIGHT HAVE BEEN FLOATED FOR OUR BENEFIT, EITHER TO INVOLVE USG OR TO ATTEMPT TO FORECLOSE ANY SUCH MANEUVER. IN ANY CASE, GALLI GAVE IT LITTLE CREDENCE.

2. MFA, AS REPORTED REFTTEL (A), BELIEVES THAT RISK OF MILITARY

INCIDENT (AT LEAST IN VICINITY OF SCARABEO IV) RELATIVELY LOW. HOWEVER, THIS DEPENDS ON MAINTAINING STATUS QUO. GALLI SAID THAT FOR SCARABEO IV TO RE-COMMENCE DRILLING OR LEAVE AREA WOULD RISK PROVOKING STRONG REACTION.

3. GALLI DID NOT RPT NOT SPECULATE ON POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OR INDICATE WHEN MFA THOUGHT ONE MIGHT BE REACHED. FROM RECENT GOI CONTACTS, GOT HAD SHOWN A CERTAIN "UNDERSTANDING" OF PRESSURES ON ITALY AND SEEMED WILLING TO ALLOW TIME FOR THINGS TO WORK OUT. LIBYANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE GOI COMPLETELY BAFFLED. APPARENTLY, LARG HAS INDICATED THAT RETALIATION FOR ACQUIESCING TO TUNISIANS WOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO ENI BUT WOULD INVOLVE OTHER ITALIAN INTERESTS AS WELL. HOWEVER, GOI (AND PRESUMABLY ENI) HAD RECEIVED SO MANY CLAIMS, CHARGES, THREATS, AND DEMANDS THAT IT WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT THE LARG REALLY BELIEVED OR INTENDED TO DO.

4. ACCORDING MFA'S NORTH AFRICAN POLITICAL AFFAIRS DESK, GOI HAS SUGGESTED TO LARG THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO POSSIBLE EXITS FROM PRESENT IMPASSE: EITHER RESOLVE ENTIRE DEMARCATION ISSUE OR TACKLE THIS SINGLE PROBLEM IN WAY THAT WOULD NOT PREJUDICE LARG POSITION ON THE WIDER DISPUTE. HOWEVER, OUR INTERLOCUTOR ADMITTED, THE SUGGESTION GOT NOWHERE. ALL DECISIONS IN LARG HE SAID ARE MADE BY QADDAFI ON MOSTLY IRRATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL TERMS.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY COMMENTS PARAS 3, 4 IN REFTEL (C) STILL APPLY. TO SOME EXTENT, GOI DETACHMENT WE PERCEIVE HERE IS RESULT OF GOI EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THAT DISPUTE IS PRIMARILY CONFIDENTIAL

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BETWEEN SAIPEM AND THE LIBYANS AND TUNISIANS. THE GOI HAS EVERY INTEREST IN KEEPING ITS INVOLVEMENT AT THAT LEVEL. WHETHER OR NOT THE GOI CAN CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THIS ATTITUDE IN THE FACE OF LIBYAN AND TUNISIAN THREATS REMAINS, OF COURSE, TO BE SEEN. GI SEEMS LITTLE DISPOSED TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN SEEKING A SOLUTION TO THE DISPUTE: INSTEAD, GOI SEEKS TO MAINTAIN A DIALOGUE WITH BOTH GOT AND LARG, TO PLAY FOR TIME HOPING SITUATION WILL RESOLVE ITSELF AND AVOID BEING FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO PRINCIPALS. GARDNER

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, FOREIGN RELATIONS, OFFSHORE DRILLING, BOUNDARY CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 01-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
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